

LAUDERDALE COUNTY

Honorable Jimmy Sandlin

Lauderdale County Courthouse
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Council Priorities

1. Funds to secure a coordinator for Lauderdale County Children's Policy Council.

A policy council coordinator/executive director would enable better coordination and communication between council, committees, and community agencies. Fundraising, grant opportunities, and public relations would be enhanced by a coordinator.

2. Adequate funding for the implementation or sustaining of various social service programs.

Child care, low cost public transportation, employment training, drug abuse awareness and treatment efforts, violence intervention, Shoals Family Success Center, mental health screenings, C.I.T.Y. Program, parenting programs, and early intervention programs are all areas where increased funding is desired.

3. Healthy child care services for all children.

Providing top quality and affordable child care service that assists with enhancing school readiness indicators has long lasting positive benefits for the child, family, and community at large.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Low percentage of children who receive periodic screenings for vision, hearing, speech, and developmental delays

Action Steps

- 1) Work with local organizations to get regular screening system in place.

High percentage of child day care centers that are unlicensed

Action Steps

- 1) Work with area legislators to achieve legislation to address licensing for all child care providers.

School readiness indicators

Action Steps

- 1) Local committee working with Alabama Kids Stuff to identify school readiness indicators.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Community awareness and availability of services

Action Steps

- 1) Conduct annual community service fairs to educate the general public about social services, programs, and agencies.
- 2) Develop a marketing campaign.
- 3) Secure low cost and or free public transportation.

Lack of low cost and or free child care

Action Steps

- 1) Secure funding to assist with child care costs.
- 2) Collaboration with local day care providers and employers.

Participation in job skill and employment training

Action Steps

- 1) Encouraging youth and parents to participate in state employment training.
- 2) Expansion of JOBS program to include others besides DHR participants.
- 3) Increase public awareness of existing programs.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Poor school attendance

Action Steps

1) Developing and implementing a truancy review board which will assist with identifying and preventing truancy and truancy related issues.

Education for youth with chronic truancy or behavioral problems

Action Steps

- 1) Continued efforts with legislators and the Department of Youth Services to assist with implementation of a local C.I.T.Y. (Community Intensive Treatment Program for Youth) Program.
- 2) Secure funding.
- 3) Secure location.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Kindergarten readiness health initiative for all four year old children enrolled in day care facilities

Action Steps

- 1) Collaboration with Early Care and Education (Kids Stuff) committee to set up on-site vision, hearing, speech, and developmental delay screenings at local day care centers.
- 2) Identified developmental delays or health concerns to be referred to appropriate agencies for assistance.
- 3) Screening at health fairs and community events to target children not enrolled in daycare.

Shoals Family Success Center

Action Steps

1) Working with community and board members of The Shoals Family Success Center in assessing the areas of needed services for operational purposes of the Family Success Center.

Mental health screenings for pre-school aged children

Action Steps

1) Training of day care personnel to identify children in need of mental health services.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Availability of parenting classes and programs

Action Steps

- 1) Collaboration with faith-based community and social agencies for funding and support of parenting programs.
- 2) Committee researching of successful parenting programs.
- 3) Parent Project is offered to parents through the City and County School Systems.

Attendance at parenting classes

Action Steps

- 1) Parents involved with the court system that are identified as having poor parenting skills or those charged with "failure to send child to school" are mandated to attend a 10-week parenting program.
- 2) School administrators requiring parents with discipline problem youth to attend parenting classes.
- 3) Collaboration with faith-based communities to provide parenting programs.

Early intervention for at-risk youth

Action Steps

- 1) Healthy Families Initiative.
- 2) Multi-disciplinary team approach to assist families in order to divert an at risk child from trouble.
- 3) Referral to appropriate services for families needing assistance with troubled youth.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Underage use of tobacco products

Action Steps

- 1) Increased awareness of the dangers of tobacco use through collaborative efforts of agencies such as Riverbend Center of Mental Health Prevention Services, ABC Board, and local schools and community organizations.
- 2) Implementation of local policy changes through local government (i.e. non-smoking buildings and restaurants).

Abuse of illegal drugs and alcohol

Action Steps

- 1) Increased protective factors while lowering risk factors for illegal drugs and alcohol use.
- 2) Collaborative efforts with the Darby Foundation, Operation Save Teens, ABC Board, schools, juvenile probation, and Bradford to educate youth and families to the dangers of drug use.

Exposure to violence and violent activity

Action Steps

- 1) Collaboration efforts to address lack of funds, personnel, and education.
- 2) Violence intervention programs in county schools.
- 3) Bullying awareness programs.

Policy Recommendations

- Increased availability of funding and resources to secure a coordinator for the local children's policy council.
- Licensing of all child day care centers.
- Funding to assist with the Shoals Family Success Center.
- Implement local policy charges regarding tobacco use.
- Increase collaboration efforts on a state-wide level to address lack of funds, personnel, and education in the areas of violence intervention.
- Funding and resources for low cost or free transportation.
- Funding and resources for a C.I.T.Y. Program or youth day treatment.
- More child care subsidy funds.

Accomplishments

- CPC members attended the Fall Leadership Conference
- CPC members attended the regional CPC Conference
- Membership dues as a means of securing operational funds
- Filing of incorporation
- Application for non-profit status
- Creation of CPC slogan
- Enhancement of public relations with monthly television appearances
- Executive officers (vice chair, treasure, and secretary) elected
- Establishment of the Growth Committee, in charge of fund raising and public relations
- Membership contact information kept current
- Quarterly minutes and sign-in sheets maintained
- Resource Directory maintained
- Participation from all committees in regards to assessing area needs
- Sponsoring of community programs and events, such as:
 - Shoals Family Success Center
 - Mike Reese Operation Save Teen Programs
 - ACT Preparation Classes
 - Family Festival
 - Stand for Children Day
 - Healthy Marriage Initiative Rally
 - Truancy Review Board
 - Community Service Fair